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TAREQ AZIZ

ON ARAB–IRANIAN RELATIONS

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To avoid confusing the issues
keeping the facts secret
and letting the conspiracy
pass unnoticed.

Summer 1980

Ever since its modern-day revival began, the Arab nation has been the target of various types of plots and challenges aimed at its very essence, its cultural character, and sections of its land, as well as at its freedom, its basic interests and its rightful ambitions towards unity and progress. For years, the nation has been in a state of acute tension, and has experienced sharp conflicts with both itself and with external forces, none of which has yet been resolved. Even though suffering bitter setbacks and grave defeats, the Arab nation and its revolutionary liberation movement have nevertheless achieved several victories over this long and difficult period of emergence to the fore.

About the past and present state of the nation, about the causes of its setbacks and victories, and about the lessons to be inferred, there is much which can be said. In this modest attempt, however, I would like to shed light on a particular aspect, which, in relation to the current circumstances of the Arab nation, I believe to be

of exceptional significance and to have played a fundamental role in both the setbacks and triumphs. This aspect concerns the clarity and confusion of issues and their link with the Arab nation of today, with specific reference to its relations with Iran.

A sound study of the Arab struggle and the course it has followed over the years of conflict and tension reveals an important fact. It is that the Arab nation and its revolutionary liberation movement, even when relatively weak from the material point of view, are at their strongest and best in the battles waged and challenges faced when circumstances are unambivalent and the enemies clearly pinpointed than when the issues are confused, when the image is shaky, and when the enemy has no clear outline. The same still applies even once, materially speaking, the Nation and its Movement grow stronger.

One might say this is a general observation which makes no particular distinction of the Arab nation and its revolutionary liberation movement. This is true, but the tragedy of the Arab nation is that too many of its people and leaders are unsufficiently aware of the above truth, whereas their adversaries are giving it their avid attention, and making shrewd and malicious use of it on a wide scale. This phenomenon occurs time and time

again, and when the Nation appears strong, ready to progress and to witness a revival, the losses and setbacks recur. Let us take some examples from contemporary history familiar to today's generation and compare.

In the 1940's, the greater part of the Arab Homeland was under direct colonial rule. Only a small number of Arab countries had independence, but owing to the widespread colonial influence in political, economic, administrative and cultural fields, even these were bound by foreign precepts and agreements. They were also poor, backward, and militarily weak, and their diplomatic channels and information systems extremely unsophisticated.

By this time, the Zionist plan to establish the Jewish state in Palestine was complete, and even though weak and backward, the Arab regimes were compelled to fight back and resist. The Zionists, with the support of the entire colonial world and a certain measure of Soviet assistance, were therefore only able to seize a limited portion of Palestinian territory where they then established their usurping entity. The response of the Arab nation was one of complete rejection, and the determination to repel the Zionist entity remained firm, as did hopes of retrieving the usurped homeland.

More than thirty years later, all the Arab countries had gained their independence, by which time their armies, information systems and diplomatic channels were far superior than in the 1940's. Furthermore, the budgets of a considerable number of these countries were now being calculated in terms of billions. However, in the wake of this relative strength in the Arab position we find many Arab circles have come to accept the Zionist usurpation of the land occupied before 1967, and even have dealings of one form or another with the Zionist entity. Not only this but the president of the largest Arab state has gone as far as to recognize and ally himself with this very entity and with imperialism against the Arab nation.

Naturally, this outlook has political, economic and cultural reasons of local, Arab and international dimensions, about which there is much to be said. However, we must not forget that the man responsible, namely Sadat, is the same man who broadcast the first communique of the July 23rd Revolution of 1952. He was also a deputy to the nationalist president, Abdul Nasser, until the moment of his death, and was Egypt's ruler at the time of the October 1973 war. In the stage after this war, only a small number of revolutionary Arab national forces were aware of the twisted

path being followed by Sadat, whereas the majority considered him a national leader. Even if some disagreed with him on certain details and tactics, many Arab political leading circles remained his ally, even to the day before his inauspicious visit to Jerusalem.

How is it that Sadat could have moved from the position of "national leader" and "hero of the October war", as he was regarded even by the circles which now oppose him, to one of recognizing the Zionist entity and betraying the Arab cause in such a shameless and unveiled manner? This too when the political leading circles of the 1940's and 1950's, with all that we know of them and their reactionary nature and foreign ties, could not even have contemplated doing a portion of what Sadat has done.

I hold that the basic "secret" is that the battle between the Arabs and the Zionist entity in the 1940's and 1950's was an open one where the lines of both sides were clearly marked. Thus, even those rulers who overtly associated themselves with Western colonialism dared not do what Sadat did a few decades later.

It would not be wrong to say that if, a year after taking over the presidency, Sadat had declared his resolve to go to Jerusalem and cooperate

directly with the Zionist enemy, the masses would have had him destroyed or killed, and violently so too. Equally, had he declared his intentions directly after the October war he would have faced strong opposition, but in 1977 he was able to do this and carry through his conspiratorial plan.

What Sadat cunningly and viciously did was to organize the process gradually in such a way as to shuffle the cards. He confused military action, apparently resembling a war of liberation, with the political flexibility which results in various causes and other interests being gradually abandoned. Prior to this, Sadat had confused the issues of democracy and the need to rectify certain aspects of the Nasser experiment with the counter-revolution and assault on this progressive experiment. He also confused independence in dealing with the Soviet Union with actual bias towards the United States.

Sadat blurred the distinction between several issues, which, if taken separately. would appear to a short-sighted observer, lawful and necessary. This he did, however, in a way which perplexed the masses and made them feel at a loss, thus making it easy for the conspirator to put his plot into action after having systematically destroyed, paralyzed or isolated the forces capable of resistance one after the other. In this he succeeded by de-

viously confusing, deceiving and fragmenting all nationalist, Egyptian, Arab and international forces and elements opposed to his true purpose, whilst simultaneously acting to rally together, strengthen and organize the Egyptian, Arab and international forces supporting him. For this, he used different parties, individuals, movements, leaderships and countries, all of which eventually discovered that they were being used for purposes other than those of which they had originally thought.

Let us now turn to another historical example which is still remembered by today's generation. In the 1950's, there were two fronts in the Arab arena. One was reactionary and linked to Western colonialism. It advocated ties with the Western military allies, and was led by the Nuri Sa'ids regime in Iraq. The other was nationalist and opposed to the colonial rule and influence. It advocated liberation and neutrality, and was led by Abdul Nasser. Between the two there was bitter strife in the fields of politics and information. There was no question of the strength and tyranny of the reactionary colonial front.

However, since the battle was open, and since the enemy lines were clearly marked, the Arab liberation movement progressed and strengthened, foiling attempts to spread the Baghdad Pact throughout the countries of the area, and a great

historic achievement was made with the union of Syria and Egypt and the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR). In July, 1958, a revolution took place in Iraq, and the regime of Nuri Sa'id and the Baghdad Pact was toppled. The Arab nationalists then felt that they had attained a high point of strength in countering the colonialist forces and their clients within the area of the Arab Homeland. Also the horizons became, open before them on the road to liberation, progress and unity. But let us just see how matters took their course.

Amongst the forces of Arab nationalism there were various opinions about the prevailing conditions within the UAR in terms of the method of rule, the democratic options and the like. Nevertheless, those loyal to the cause of unity believed that the UAR, as a large Arab power established in modern history, constituted at the very least a powerful obstacle to Zionist aggression.

When the revolution took place in Iraq, undoubtedly nationalist and hostile to colonialism, the forces of Arab nationalism immediately called for the union between Iraq and the UAR. Conversely, Abdul Karim Qasim, along with the Iraqi communists and all regional, anti-Arab and reactionary elements and forces, propounded the issue of democracy.

Unquestionably, democracy is an issue both rightful and vital within the Arab struggle, but the parties to this alliance put democracy against nationalism and union with the UAR. They launched a large-scale war against the UAR, and against Abdul Nasser, Arab nationalism, and the national forces in Iraq, particularly the Ba'th party. They were joined by certain Arab parties and international forces. Because the cards had been shuffled and an intricate web woven, a complicated situation arose. The Arab patriot therefore felt puzzled and lost, his feelings wavering between the importance of unity and the need for democracy. He was also enveloped in a whirl of conflict in which no one side appeared to be any more right than another.

The outcome was that the plan for union between Iraq and the UAR was thwarted, and the national forces in Iraq, with the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party at the fore, were dealt heavy blows. Consequently the question of democracy was buried, and a harsh military dictatorship ruled in Iraq on one hand, and on the other, the separatists, who had greatly benefited from the conflict of Qasim, the communists and their allies with the UAR, succeeded in their plot for secession.

Such was the state of the Arab nation three years after the revolution in Iraq after all the conditions for the Arab revolutionary movement

to grow and spread were ripe. The Syrian-Egyptian union, as well as democracy in Iraq, were lost, and the only beneficiaries were the Zionists and colonialists. This must not be forgotten when dealing with current-day issues, for even if in superficial aspects they differ from the past, the basic facts still remain the same. The two examples cited will perhaps help us to follow the right path, and to differentiate between the beneficial and the harmful from amongst the mass of contradictory attitudes and confused questions.

What exactly are the dangers currently threatening the Arab nation? And, within the framework of these conditions, how should we interpret the behaviour of the Iranian leaders vis-à-vis the Arab causes, and their actions against Iraq, and in particular against its nationalist revolutionary leadership?

These issues are being confused on a large scale. They are also being discussed in a heated manner. However, despite this complicated picture, it is my belief that the forces of nationalism are able to distinguish right from wrong, and to find the true path, if they return to the original source material and recall their bitter experiences of the past and the lessons learnt.

The Arab Homeland has numerous problems

and acute political and social contradictions. Class conflict and wide-scale corruptions still exist, particularly in certain regimes, and there are various cases of foreign influence and instances of backwardness in many fields etc. Nevertheless, within the framework of this situation, where opinions vary as to the best way of dealing with the different parties, movements, and intellectual and political trends, there is a sort of unanimity or rather an almost unanimous agreement that the greatest current dangers to the Arab nation are the existence of the Zionist entity and the presence of foreign influence, both presenting a continual and ever-increasing threat. There is then the vicious betrayal by Sadat's regime of the Arab cause, the results of which threaten the balance of conflict between the Arab nation on the one hand, and its Zionist enemy on the other. There is likewise near concensus on the need to counter these dangers with a unified Arab stand.

What then are the conditions and stands which weaken or strenghten this confrontation? When Sadat signed the Camp David accords, a dangerous situation arose in the Arab arena, as well as widescale confusion, and a strong fear that the Camp David plan might spread to other countries. Calls were made for foreign strategies to be embraced to counter the American-Zionist-Sadat machination, and there was much despair and despondency.

The result was an extremely negative one, and had it continued for long, the danger caused by Sadat's betrayal and the establishment of the American-Zionist - Sadat alliance would have reached alarming proportions.

Iraq with its national leadership then assumed a national and historic role, which was widely acknowledged, even by those normally unfavourable towards Iraq. In other words, Iraq, even though it had no previous experience in dealing with Arab summits, took the initiative for holding the Baghdad Summit. After a complex political battle, it emerged from the conference having succeeded in adopting a national stand, considered to be "the minimum limit" but it allowed those who wished to go further to do just that, and the possibilities for further development were kept open.

When the reconciliation agreements between Sadat and the Zionist entity were signed on March 26th, 1979, Iraq, which also hosted the Conference of Arab Ministers for Foreign and Economic Affairs succeeded, after a hard and complicated political fight, in setting the conditions for taking resolutions of higher quality and broader outlook than those adopted by the summit a few months earlier.

Hence, a favourable Arab position against Sadat's betrayal was formed, which, through the

development of its positive elements, could move forward, even if not fast enough to satisfy the ambitions of the revolutionary nationalists demanding a "maximum limit" programme. This position was nevertheless still relatively advanced in comparison to what might have transpired were it not for the Baghdad Summit and its subsequent outcome.

The greatest achievement of the Baghdad Summit was its great success in sifting the issues confused by Sadat and unravelling the mazes created when he sank to the lowest level of treachery. After the summit, it became clear to the Arab and Egyptian masses, to Islamic public opinion, and to public opinion in both the third world and internationally, that there were two different and widely separate stands: that of Sadat, and that of the majority of the Arab nation.

The clarity which resulted from the Baghdad Summit enabled the Arab nation, in a matter of months, dedicated to political and diplomatic activities, to isolate Sadat amongst the Arabs, as well as within the Islamic world and the non-aligned movement. This weakened his position in Africa and prevented Western Europe from standing firmly behind him. The latter instead adopted a stand much closer to that of the Baghdad Summit.

All this reflected the increasingly tortuous path followed by the Camp David accords, as well as the position of Sadat's regime within Egypt. His misconducting influence on the Egyptian masses decreased, and his economic, political, and security crises increased. In relation to the Arab-Zionist conflict, these results are extremely significant. Whilst it is true to say that they failed to deal a magic blow to the conflict – impossible in such conflicts in any case – they nonetheless rectified the whole situation, even if the gains made in the Arab interest were only small.

* * *

It was in such circumstances that the Shah of Iran fell, and the new leaders came to rule in Iran. I shall not evaluate the events in Iran here, nor shall I discuss whether it was a revolution or merely a popular uprising. We shan't dispute the nature of the revolution and its consequences, but will just deal with the position of the Iranian leadership and its link with that of the Arab nation in its struggle against Zionism, and against Sadat's treachery and the imperialist scheming.

If we look back we'll soon find that the Iranian leadership began launching campaigns against Iraq from the very first. This must be remembered, as

some imagine or try to suggest that the so-called Iraqi-Iranian disagreement is only recent.

As evidence of my claim, I shall quote certain passages from a series of articles published in *al-Thawra* in Iraq on June 12th, 13th and 14th on Iraqi-Iranian relations. These are as follows:

"Relations between Iran and Iraq are once again troubled, and the Iranian media is again attacking Iraq, the Iraqi leadership and the Party of the Revolution after four years and more of silence. Why is this happening when there is revolution in Iran against the Shah, who was openly hostile and violently aggressive towards Iraq and the Iraqi Leadership and the Party of the Revolution from 1969 to 1975? Why is this happening when it was the Shah who took political, military, and all other actions open to him to restrain Iraq, and prevent it from surging forward with all its great potential in the Arab national arena.

"This is a big question which must be answered both clearly and frankly if we are to be fully aware of the situation and the obstacles faced before the situation worsens. When the Shah first began his information, political and military provocation against Iraq, which also extended to the media, we said that it was in the interests of Iran, Iraq, and all countries

within the area, for our two neighbouring countries to be on good relations. It was only sensible for both to search for a formula for sound relations between them, and to look to the factors which would unite, rather than separate them.

"The Shah, however, was conceited in the extreme, and believed himself to have the power and ability to continue the game. This vanity of his led him to believe he could change the political situation in Iraq, and in 1970, he embarked on his well-known conspiracy with scattered fag ends of traitors and mercenaries whose heads later rolled in the revolution. He was goaded on by his covetous desire to control the area, by a deep resentment of ancient history, and by the international forces which wanted to gain control of the area by spreading dispute and tension throughout. The Shah played the game, and was confident that he would be the winner. As the years passed, his plots against Iraq intensified to the point of war, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly.

"If we go back and listen to what Tehran radio, the Tehran press, and the Tehran leadership were saying, we find that the Shah's rule used religion most of the time in his campaign against Iraq, and that his most important tools were men who professed to be religious figures. This we would do well to remember, for oddly enough, it is the same game

which is now being played, even though the player is different.

"The then ruler of Tehran would demonstrate sentiments of brotherhood and friendliness towards the Arabs outside the immediate area, but would inflict harm upon those within his vicinity. Furthermore, the Shah, whilst establishing friendly relations and strong alliances with some Arab rulers, was consolidating his campaign against Iraq, and sending his troops to occupy the Arab islands of Greater Tumb, Smaller Tumb, and Abu Musa in the Gulf. This we must also remember, as history is about to repeat itself in Iran, if it had not already done so, and using the same methods.

The passage goes on to say the following:

"Iraq immediately welcomed the success of the Iranian revolution, and sent a memo expressing its wish to establish good relations with Iran to the new government. It was also careful to confirm this by sending an official note clearly defining the clear and healthy bases of the relationship between the two countries.

"Iraq's position towards Iran and its affairs differs from that of other Arab countries, for as well as the factors which unite the Arabs with Iran, the two share a common border of several hundred

kilometres. They therefore have direct mutual interests, and cooperation between them yields positive results, whereas any dispute between the two has direct negative effects. Iraq therefore openly clarified its position towards the Iranian revolution in a clear frank note.

"However, immediately after the success of the revolution by only a few days, we began hearing rumours and reading newspaper articles denigrating Iraq. At the time, we said that Iran was still unsettled, that there were different trends, wings and factions within the country... that there must be some who wanted to fish in troubled waters... and let us not forget imperialism and its agents... and all sorts of other justifications. And we remained silent and tolerated it all.

"Silence, however, did not stem the tide of insults, which grew worse and became even more vindictive. Those responsible perhaps thought that silence was a sign of weakness. This time, however, we have made official moves. Our embassy in Tehran has consulted the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and drawn its attention to this harmful behaviour towards Iraq. An explanation was demanded, and met with only vague answers, and unconvincing excuses and procrastination.

"However, it is most noticeable that the majority of offensive remarks, both direct and indirect, came from favourites of Khomeini. Over the past few days, comments made by those such as Ahmad Madani and certain other Iranian officials have become slanderous in the extreme. Iran radio has also begun an organized campaign against Iraq, and we must here ask ourselves: Why?

"The Iranian revolution was one against imperialism, and was carried out independent of East or West. Geographically speaking, the closest country, also maintaining an independent position, is Iraq. Iraq is the largest fort in the struggle against imperialism in the area, and its resistance has been so forceful that it has become the biggest thorn in the flesh of the imperialist scheming. Iraq is a country completely independent of any international bloc, and it is only natural that those in a joint position should meet.

"If, as it is alleged, the Iranian revolution was in part for the sake of Palestine, then the country of which the Palestinian struggle currently has most need is Iraq. This is because it is the largest country in the Arab East, and the one with most human, military and economic resources. On other counts, without Iraq there would be nothing to bridge the strategic gap resulting from the Egyptian leader's

treachery of the Arab nation in its conflict with the Zionist enemy and imperialism. Does loyalty to Palestine go hand in hand with harrassing Iraq, the country of which Palestine is in most need?

"Had the Iranian revolution been an Arab ally, then the first Arabs it should ally itself with should have been those of Iraq, as they are close neighbours. It is illogical to give the Arabs who are physically distant sugar-coated words, and yet slander and plot against those who are physically close. Then they say they are Arab allies. What do those Arabs who are far from the arena gain from kind but empty words when those close to it are being subjected to direct insult and harm?"

* * *

These extracts have been published as a reminder. Let us not forget that in June, 1979, when these words were written as a responsible and sensible reply on the part of the Iraqi leadership to the campaigns launched by Iran's rulers, that the Arab nation had already seen the results of the Baghdad Summit, and recognized the need to take the same path further. As already mentioned, Iraq played an effective role in this. At that time too, the Syrian-Iraqi relations established as a result of the National Joint Action Charter still held, and the hopes and national aspirations for unity and joint action

against the Sadat-Zionist alliance were there in force.

However, it was during this very same period that the Iranian campaign against Iraq suddenly mushroomed, and that the Arab camp and the whole area witnessed a new attempt to confuse the issues and weave another intricate web.

The Iranians again stepped up their feverish campaigns against Iraq less than a year after the first had ended. This time they were not restricted to the media and politics, as terrorist operations were organized against the people and the community with the aim of distorting the picture of the internal situation in Iraq and imposing a secondary battle on it. On this occasion, the Iranian rulers did not even attempt to hide behind façades, but used Persian elements and organizations within Iraq in these operations.

The important question here, giving a basic key to understanding the situation, is when did this take place? The first time the Iranian rulers launched their media campaigns was when Iraq was effecting its eminent and positive role in the Baghdad Summit and the conference of Arab foreign and economics ministers towards securing a firm Arab stand against the Sadat-Zionist-imperialist alliance and the Camp David conspiracy. This time they escalated their

campaigns under the following conditions:

Over recent months, Iraq has undertaken three major roles, the vital necessity of which to the Arab cause in general, and to the struggle against Zionism and imperialism in particular, is patent to any true nationalist.

First: Last September, the non-aligned summit conference was held in Havana, and there was a fierce and complex political fight to denounce the Camp David agreements and isolate the Egyptian regime from the non-aligned movement. Saddam Hussein played a fundamental part in the final outcome of the conference. Iraq used the weight of its good relations with the non-aligned nations in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and President Hussein transcended the delicacies of Arab relations, and strove to cement a united Arab stand. He visited each delegate in turn, and ignored protocol by even approaching certain foreign ministers in the corridors for discussion. This was so that the Arab nation could make a vital inroad towards mobilizing the Arab and international political stand against Sadat's treachery and the Camp David conspiracy.

In the Havana Conference the issue of non-alignment itself was put to the test. Because the movement had lost its momentum and been influenced by the superpowers, there were strong cur-

rents attempting to pull it to one side or another of the international camp. There were therefore wider claims to the effect that the movement was in vain, ultimately meaning that it would be destroyed and alignments again made to the two superpowers.

President Saddam Hussein played a prominent role in the Havana Conference as regards asserting the independent element hostile to imperialism, and the progressive and liberation nature of the non-aligned movement, and worked day and night to maintain the unity of the movement. The Conference was finally successful, and Iraq's positive role within the movement, its loyalty to its principles, and its readiness to sacrifice were asserted, and it is for these reasons that Baghdad was chosen as seat for the next non-aligned summit conference.

Secondly: In the hard political battle waged by President Saddam Hussein in Havana, it was revealed that serious gaps existed in Afro-Arab relations, and that a considerable number of African leaders had reservations concerning their treatment by the Arab states. In consequence, they were not prepared to adopt the same line as the Arabs in the Havana Conference against the Egyptian regime and the Camp David conspiracy.

After returning to Baghdad, this matter was given serious attention, and it was resolved to carry out an active campaign to establish friendly relations and firm cooperation with most African countries. This

was to let them know that the Arab nation was dealing with them, not only to draw their support for the Arab cause, but also because it was sincerely endeavouring to establish fruitful relations with them, and offer the impartial aid of which they were in such urgent need. This was particularly so in view of the losses these nations had suffered as a result of their support for the Arabs against the Zionist entity and its American imperialist protector.

It is well known that Iraq has no particular interests in Africa, and that its basic aim was the Arab cause and Arab interests in confrontation with the Zionist imperialist enemy.

In recent months, there have been several meetings in Baghdad with many African leaders, a prominent sign of the political activity in this area. This was an aspect which drew the attention of many international forces and caused them concern.

Even though Iraq does not have huge financial reserves or excessive wealth to squander, since it is building a strong army and is deeply involved into a comprehensive and ambitious development plan, yet it put aside some of its needs to offer impartial and serious aid to friendly African nations in an attempt to make a positive contribution towards improving Afro-Arab relations, and towards establishing the African position, crystallized in Havana, against the

Camp David accords and the traitorous path followed by Sadat. This is what Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein, did in the non-aligned and African fields.

The third and most important role was the national initiative or the eight-point national declaration made on February 8th. Why was this declaration made?

The seizure of the hostages in the American embassy in Tehran, and the subsequent Soviet intervention in Afghanistan created a new situation in the area. Without going into detail about these two incidents here, one of the most serious results has been an increase of tension in the area and between the two superpowers. American imperialism has displayed a frantic tendency for military presence in the area and to seek military bases, or secure so-called military facilities for use against Iran and the Soviet Union.

In this climate, and to avoid the Arab world being turned into a stage for international conflict, or any part of it being used as a station for military forces engaged in matters of no concern to the Arab nation, President Saddam Hussein made his declaration on February 8th, 1980. Equal reasons behind this noble declaration were cooperation and fraternity, and the organization of Arab relations on

sound nationalist bases, as well as the establishment of good-neighbourly relations with the surrounding countries, including Iran.

Within a short period, the Declaration had the agreement and support of most Arab countries, and Iraq received many assurances of their readiness to adopt the Declaration and consider it a national charter to be strictly adhered to. Serious attempts were also made to convene an Arab summit conference to this end.

From March 25th-27th, a people's conference was held in Baghdad, and attended by a large number of Arab parties, movements, organizations and personalities. President Saddam Hussein's declaration was discussed and confirmed essential to the Arab nation and its struggle against the Zionist enemy and the imminent dangers.

Four days after this conference, Iran began harrassing Iraq, and its political and media campaigns, and its military build-up against Iraq, were stepped up. After the Iranian rulers had frozen the hostage situation they concentrated on Iraq as their number one enemy. This is not mere inferral, but what the Iranian officials themselves said.

Who, one wonders, will benefit, and at this time in particular, from the Iranian stand against

Iraq which has these roles and responsibilities? How can we explain the fact that the Iranian revolution, which is alledgedly for independence from the great powers, is conspiring hatred against the very country and leadership which assert the method of independence embodied by President Hussein's declaration, and which are striving to confirm and establish it? How does one explain the fact that the Iranian revolution, which claims to support the Arabs in their battle against the Zionist entity, is carrying out these operations? This question is all the more vital, as these operations could divert Iraq from its effective role in the battle against the Zionist entity, and as Iraq assumed responsibility for the Baghdad Summit, has other large responsibilities, and is making a great deal of effort and sacrifice.

Any honest observer of the Arab situation and conditions in the area cannot fail to see the damage and harm in the Iranian rulers' stand against Iraq, not only to Iraq itself, but also to the whole Arab nation and its struggle against the Zionist enemy after Sadat's treachery and the American imperialist plan.

However, in order to clarify our side of the facts, we will tackle with frankness and confidence an issue which has perhaps occurred to those who are confused about the Iranian position. In other

words, did Iraq injure Iran first, and is this in retaliation? This is a vital question, and to answer it we shall explain certain important aspects of the situation. It is well-known that a severe conflict emerged between Iraq and Iran under the rule of the Shah, and lasted several years, but who began it?

In April, 1969, when the Revolution in Iraq was in its first year, the Shah unilaterally declared the annulment of the 1937 treaty which agreed the borders and relations between the two neighbouring countries. In order not to forget and shuffle the cards, when the Shah did this he said he was rectifying a situation imposed on Iran in British colonial days, and that as long as his regime had "got rid of" the colonialist domination he was nullifying the treaty and demanding a new position on borders and relations. This is what the Shah said and no-one else.

Since that date, and until March, 1975, the Shah imposed an aggressive battle on revolutionary Iraq using all political and military means as well as the media, and endeavoured to intervene in Iraqi affairs. In January, 1970, his intelligence plotted to overthrow the revolutionary regime, and used Barazani to rebel against the revolution and stir up civil war.

At that time, the Shah, in his declaration

against Iraq, and in his intelligence activities, was hiding behind the religious question, playing the communal card, and mobilizing some of those who claimed to be from the religious circle. Anyone who wishes to study the truth can refer to these facts.

After six years of conflict, the Shah found that the idea of engulfing or fragmenting Iraq, or of aborting its national socialist revolution, would not succeed, and that the conflict with Iraq was a double-edged sword piercing his own country, as well as his armed forces and regime. It was then possible, in March, 1975, to reach agreement with him on the matters of coexistence and good neighbourliness.

Then the Shah went and the new regime came. Without making accusations or debating the question, it is not impossible, objectively speaking, to understand the true intentions. Had Iraq any interest in harming Iran after the revolution whereby it would receive the same treatment? The answer is absolutely and emphatically not. The regime in Iraq is a national socialist regime, and believes in the principles and objectives of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party (ABSP). The latter's aims are not "national", but nationalist. Iraq, therefore, on principle, has no particular interest in any political or intellectual choice made by the Iranians, always provided that such choices do not arouse conflict between the two

countries or stir up aggression against Iraq and the Arab nation. Furthermore, Iraq, with its revolutionary and socialist regime, is more at ease if its neighbours share similar principles and trends. This is because it provides for better cooperation in the area than if the regimes are apart intellectually, socially and politically, as well as in the nature of their relations and their position on international issues.

It is only natural for us to say that the closest options to the principles of the ABSP and the interests of Arab Iraq is for the political, social and intellectual option of the Islamic nations to be one where their Islamic character is asserted. This is because when they do so they necessarily grow closer to the Arab nation, and join forces with the Arabs in their struggle against Zionism.

Of this there are living examples. When Turkey grew away from the spirit of Islam by virtue of secularism and affiliation to Western civilization it simultaneously grew further apart from the Arabs. Not only this, but on several occasions, particularly in the 1950's, it was also used against the Arab nation and its liberation movement, and established relations with the Zionist entity which were detrimental to the Arab nation.

The same applies to Iran under the Shah, who

attempted to constrain Iran to alienate itself from its Islamic character. Iran consequently became an enemy of the Arabs and an ally of their enemies. Because Pakistan, on the other hand, retained its Islamic character, even when a party to the Baghdad and Cento Pacts, it remained close to the Arabs, supported their causes, and rejected any form of relations with the Zionist entity.

The revolution in Iran took place when Iraq was shouldering its responsibilities resulting from the Baghdad Summit and the National Joint Action Charter with Syria. In order to carry out these voluntarily chosen responsibilities in an effective manner, Iraq was therefore at that time in greatest need of calm and stability on its eastern borders. It was also in greatest need of any new force to add to the balance of power in the area gainst the Sadat-Zionist-American alliance.

So what possible political or economic benefit could Iraq gain from inflicting damage and injury on Iran? Absolutely none, as conflict leads only to losses which can in no way be offset by any measure of gain. Iraq could not enter into such a conflict unless coerced to do so in defence of its patriotic and national essence.

Since these are the bare objective facts, and since Iraq, as it is, and is seen to be, a responsible

and sensible leadership, which over twelve years has demonstrated a superior capacity for countering difficulties and overcoming traps, would it ever enter into a battle of this type unless forced to do so?

Some might say that Iraq brought up the question of the three islands, of Ahwaz, and of the Shatt al-Arab agreements, prompting Iran to respond in this fashion. Yes, Iraq did indeed bring up these three issues, but is it so strange for Iraq to want the return of the three islands occupied by the Shah of Iran with his military forces, his imperialist and expansionist arrogance, and the collusion of British colonialism and American imperialism? Is it not yet stranger still that the Iranian revolution, which came, it claims, to uproot the Shah's regime and undo his policies and misdeeds, did not declare from the first its resolve to rid these islands of the Shahanshah's colonialism?

What actually happened, after attempts by the new Iranian regime to avoid and ignore the question of these three islands, was that its leader, just as the Shah had done nine years earlier, openly declared the islands to be "Iranian", and said that he would not relinquish them. So who is to blame?

With respect to the Ahwaz region, the Iranian peoples, after the revolution which toppled the Shahanshah's dictatorial and fanatic regime, which

for years had imposed a purely racial Persian dominance, denied their national characteristics, and deprived them of their legal rights within Iran, demanded a change in the situation. The Arabs of the Ahwaz area were amongst those who believed the revolution would grant their natural and legitimate rights, but the new leadership duped them in feud and hatred exactly as the Shah did. Let us not say more.

So whose position is it which creates surprise and inflicts harm? Is it that of Iraq, which supported the just demands of the Arab people of the Ahwaz area for autonomy within the framework of a united Iranian state? Or is the cause of astonishment the fact that the Iranian "revolution" is denying the Ahwaz inhabitants and other Iranian peoples their straightforward and fair demands, instead bringing them ruin and disaster? Or was Iraq contradicting its principles and asking of others what it would not want for itself? Or is the Iranian "revolution" contradicting its words with its deeds?

Iraq believes it is only natural for the Iranian peoples to have a form of autonomy within the framework of a single Iranian state. This principle it applied to itself by granting the Iraqi Kurds a form of autonomy practised within the framework of the one homeland. So who is contradicting who, and who is harming who?

Likewise, it is only natural for liberation revolutions destroying colonialist, dictatorial, and tyrannical regimes to present a new programme declaring the end of colonial dominance, and of the repression and injustices of the defunct regime. It is acceptable for the revolution to ask for time to see its programme through, and to discuss the nature and size of the demands made. But a revolution which denies these demands from the outset and maintains the previous status quo is not a revolution.

The same principle also applies to the question of the Shatt al-Arab issue. The circumstances of the conflict between Iraq and Iran have imposed a formula for the Shatt al-Arab which is incompatible with Iraq's historical rights and interests in the area. This occurred when Iran was ruled by an expansionist imperialist regime, which, in its aggression against the Arab nation and Iraq, had the total support of American imperialism. Why is it abnormal for the new "revolutionary" regime, which advocates fraternity with the Arabs, to consider reinstating the rights denied by the defunct regime?

Who is contradicting himself here? Is it he who demands rights arrested from him by a tyrannical oppressor? Or is it he who claims to have revolted against everything that oppressor represented, yet who continues to retain his hold over the latter's

gains, namely the islands and Shatt al-Arab, follow the same policies towards the Iranian peoples, and flare up in anger and indignation each time it is mentioned to him?

It is not at all difficult for any fair and rational person to see just who is contradicting himself. The mass of accusations and attempts to create confusion cannot conceal the clear and simple facts as seen and understood by anyone who has reasoning and insight.

The truth, as history will show, is that Iraq, from its pure nationalist and principled premises, and from its penetrating view arising from its loyalty to principle, sensed very early on the spurious and contradictory nature of the statements made by the new Iranian leadership. It made sincere endeavours to uncover the truth and make it known to the Arab nation, and was first to do so. However, despite the accusations levelled at Iraq from certain brothers and relatives, we don't say enemies, what Iraq felt proved to be right, because the black and depressing truth emerged a few months later.

Iraq inflicted no battle or harm upon the Iranian "revolution". Instead, with all sincerity and every good intention, Iraq put that revolution before its responsibilities, only to be requited with this resentment and injury which we see and live.

Iraq, again with all good intentions, demanded that Iran, after the revolution, change the policies affecting the Arabs for the worse, but the post-"revolution" rulers of Iran confirm that they and their predecessors are merely one and the same.

When making assertions, supported by fact and logic, that Iraq was not responsible for initiating the conflict with Iran, we are not aiming to throw light on the matter, but to rest our consciences and those of our brother Arabs, and to eliminate any likelihood of self-blame. Some may ask why we instigated the conflict when the revolution was in the process of being established, and faced with so many challenges and difficulties.

The truth is, however, that it is was the Iranian rulers themselves who decided the issue. They began boasting that they had started the conflict intentionally, to the extent that they no longer needed to hide this fact as they used to do in past months. Headed by the President of the Republic, they have recently stated both clearly and frankly that they are now striving to "export the Iranian revolution", something which, as Bani Sadr said, they consider vital to the survival and continuance of their "revolution". The Iranian President himself has also openly declared his refusal to have discussion or mediation towards solving the problems with Iraq.

Iran's campaign against Iraq is therefore nothing more than a result of the so-called "revolution export" plan. It is not a response to any determined stand or action supposedly taken by Iraq. Nor is it the effect of relations between the two countries. Were this the case, how would we be able to grasp the situation?

For the truth, we must discuss all probabilities without sensitivity, as anyone with confidence in himself and the fact that truth is on his side is not afraid to look deeper into any possibilities or hypotheses.

Let us suppose that the Iranian leaders, who were helpless to counter the major issues brought to the surface by the revolution, and who reached an impasse over the hostage question, are endeavouring, under the theme of "exporting the revolution", to export their problems abroad as a way of diverting attention from the internal failure and gaining time, or as an attempt to restore the ruined domestic front by stirring up an illusionary enmity. If so, is this the moral thing for them to do?

The Arabs sympathized with the Iranian revolution, and wished it success. They were glad it had declared its Islamic identity, as this meant a mutual approach and concerted efforts between them and Iran in the struggle against Zionism. Is it

therefore gratitude and moral for the Iranian rulers to consider their Arab neighbours' land as a refuse ground on which to throw the remnants of their experiment, which is filled with conflict and contradiction? Has any friend of the Iranian rulers, spreading this about them said that this behaviour of theirs, apart from the lack of morality and gratitude it displays, is a great miscalculation and a wrong appraisal? The Arab arena, even if suffering some negativity, has no desire to become a refuse site for others, and indeed has the wherewithal to capably defend Arab territories with both honour and pride.

Had the rulers of Iran found that they could keep themselves amused with their experiments inside Iran, would the situation in those countries bordering the Zionist entity, as well as in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf countries, have allowed for such games and experiments? Or would the Zionist enemy, which has so far succeeded in removing Egypt from the battle and provoking communal strife in Lebanon, have exploited any opportunity provided by the Iranian scheming where a thousand such opportunities will surely arise to fully execute its scheming to dominate the area from the Nile to the Euphrates?

Iran's rulers are blinded by arrogance to an important fact. They are also blind to it because forces inside Iran are using all means to hide it, and

because certain opportunists, who give them every praise, are failing to explain the facts to their Iranian "friends". On the contrary, instead of bringing them to awareness and guiding them to the right path, they play on, and thus compound, their vanity and rashness.

What the Iranian rulers do not know is that, more than a year after the success of their revolution, they have turned their country into a stage for the game of covetous international powers. Neither do they realize that their capacity to amuse themselves with their contradictory and topsy-turvy experiments is based in two factors. The first in the continued flow of oil, and the second is that the international powers at logger-heads in the area are banking on the results which may arise from the unsettled situation in Iran. Once this has developed to the interests of one of those powers, these rulers will not able to do much about it if they continue to follow this same policy and ignore what is happening.

Have Iran's friends made their associates aware of this, and told them to beware of deluding themselves? Have they told them to keep a close watch on the situation, and have they warned them that they themselves are preparing the favourable conditions for their country to be handed over,

whether intentionally or otherwise to these covetous international powers with their avidity for the area?

Let us move on to another hypothesis, and suppose that the Iranian rulers "have principles", and feel they are right to spread their experiment to other Islamic countries. Let us also hypothesize about their claim that, in so doing, they are aiming at destroying Zionism and imperialism.

For the export of any experiment to be legal and justified, and to persuade people that it will bring them strength and the ability to destroy powerful enemies like Zionism and imperialism, the engineers of any such experiment must first achieve outstanding and convincing successes in solving the problems and major issues they face. They must also succeed in creating the moral and material potential capable of meeting the dangers and challenges encompassing the experiment in question.

But have the rulers in Iran, who heatedly urge the export of their experiment to Arab countries, done this in Iran itself? The distinctive features of the Iranian situation now they have assumed control are as follows:

– The disintegration of Iran's military capability,
– The existence of several different centres of

influence and decision, the lack of any real central power, and the sudden proliferation of disagreements and accusations amongst religious and political leaders,

- The eruption of conflicts between the Iranian peoples of non-Persian extract and the ruling leaderships, and a complete inability to solve the problem of the different nationalities within Iran,
- The spread of anarchy and unrest, and the lack of security,
- The breakdown of production, the destruction of the economy, a horrendous increase in unemployment, and the absence of the majority of food products,
- Chaos in relations with the countries of the region, and in international relations.

This is the picture of Iran today. Do her leaders want to export all this to the Arab countries on the pretext of destroying Zionism and imperialism?

Let us imagine these leaders have achieved their dreams of exporting their experiment to the whole of the Arab east, because logically speaking, the Zionist entity can only be resisted if geographically surrounded. Similarly, the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf countries, because of their basic interests, can only effectively counter imperialism if they are given direction and guidance as to how to do so.

Let us imagine these dreams have been accomplished, and that the situation in these countries now resembles the "pioneering experiment" in Iran. Let us imagine that the Iraqi, Syrian and Jordanian armies have disintegrated, that factional, political and racial differences have erupted in the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf countries, that chaos and insecurity reign, that production has come to a standstill, and that socio-political contradictions have been kindled. Who then will be destroyed: Zionism and imperialism? or the Arab nation and all the gains of the Arab struggle? I doubt we will have much difficulty replying to the question.

Throughout the long years of open war, by sowing temptation and stirring up unrest, and through the various espionage networks, the media and counter-culture, Zionism has, with the backing of imperialist forces, strived to fragment the Arab homeland, and to create interwar. The objective behind this is to cripple its capacity for revival, union, and the creation of a strong entity capable of resisting the Zionist entity and its expansionist projects. Even though Zionism achieved important goals by occupying the whole of Palestine and certain other Arab parts of land, inciting an explosive situation in Lebanon, and drawing Sadat into the ranks of traitor, the Arab nation has not surrendered to the Zionist-imperialist scheming. It is still resisting and preparing itself to face the Zionist

entity and its imperialist conspiracies.

Has the Iranian rulers' plan given the Arab nation additional strength in its battle, or has the execution of their plan, with or without their realization, achieved much of what Zionism and imperialism were aiming at?

The success of the Iranian leaders' plan to disintegrate Arab military power and cause communal and political conflict, with the resultant destruction of the existing entities, means that the "Jewish state", which has so far been an alien body in the Arab homeland rejected by the Arab national forces, will become realities which coincide with the realities some wish to see spread in the area. Should their plan meet with success, this Zionist entity will not only acquire the "legitimacy" it has lacked ever since its establishment, but will also assuredly and inevitably become the strongest petty state of all in the Arab east. Likewise, the project of the separatist leaderships in Lebanon will acquire the legitimacy they still wish to have at any price.

So what benefit will the Arab nation gain from the plan to export the Iranian experiment in its struggle against Zionism and imperialism, even despite all the negative aspects of the current situation? In whose interests are Iran's rulers working when they urge this plan with such fervour? And who is inciting them?

Some might say we acknowledge the existence of corruption and negativity in the current Arab situation, and ask why, if we are revolutionaries struggling against these, we deny that the Iranian revolution is also making attempts to eliminate both? We do not deny anyone's role, but for any attempt to fight corruption and negativity to be laudable and effective, it must take this direction, and be capable of doing so.

As we have pointed out, the expected outcome of the Iranian plan is certain ruin, and this is what the Iranian revolution has so far achieved.

There is nothing in the Iranian experiment to confirm the ability to build and merge in such a way as to actively uproot corruption, alter the negative aspects, and create an Arab revolutionary capacity which can effectively hinder Zionism, imperialism, and the aftermath of their existence they have committed in the Arab homeland.

Should we tackle corruption and negativity in the way suggested by the Iranian experiment? Is it to be dealt with by using destruction, dividing the people, and unleashing pandemonium of contradictions? I don't think any Arab who is loyal and sincere would want this.

If Iran's rulers are really fighting, as they claim,

corruption and negativity, why are they concentrating all their efforts against a regime, which even adversaries before friends recognize as being honest, national and independent? This is in addition to the fact that these rulers are courting and allying themselves with corrupt regimes, which apart from being isolated from the people and surrounded with suspicion, are experiencing wide-scale feelings of Islamic revival running high against them.

However hard one might try to do so, one cannot find any justifiable excuses for the actions of Iran's rulers, nor foresee any beneficial results. Here we are not levelling accusations from a counter position, but merely repeating what certain Iranian rulers have said of one another and of their activities. Indeed, the stream of contradictions and accusations made reveal the kind of rulers controlling Iran's fate. They also reveal the country's unhappy state, and just what depths of despair and destruction the country, and even the entire area, may reach if these rulers should satisfy their whims and achieve their dreams.

The "Iranian revolution", which surprised all freedom-lovers when struggling against the Shah's regime, has lost its shine, and baffled its friends more than its enemies. Iran's rulers have now made it into a stage for all sorts of dangerous and unfavourable situations to arise. This is so not only for

Iran and its unfortunate peoples, who have not yet had the taste of freedom after years of being repressed, crushed and tyrannized, but also for the whole area, particularly the Arab nation, which is waging the fiercest and most delicate battle of modern times against the Zionist-imperialist alliance and the betrayal of the ruler of the largest Arab country.

Certain Arab officials and political circles are hiding their heads in the sand as an ostrich does, and behaving as if there is nothing to provoke concern and responsible action. Here we are not being completely frank, as we have no wish to insult, but merely to cement a loyal Arab stand on this issue, and uncover just some of the falseness of certain Arab positions. Above all, we wish to say that if anyone thinks the revolution in Iraq, led by the ABSP and Saddam Hussein, is afraid for itself over the so-called "export of the Iranian revolution", then they are suffering from a grave illusion.

The position in Iraq is not one of "authority" in the conventional sense, but a patriotic, national, socialist and democratic revolution comprising all walks of life, and immersing itself in all cells of society. Over twelve years of profound and comprehensive revolutionary change and sincere work to build the country and serve the people, a new Iraq has been created, felt by the millions to be their

Iraq. The 17th-30th July revolution is their revolution, the Ba' th Party is their party, and Saddam Hussein is their man and leader.

The ABSP is not a conventional political organization, but is composed of cells of valiant revolutionaries, who came from the deep countryside in northern, southern, and central Iraq, as well as from the popular areas of the towns. They are experts in secret organization. They are organizers of demonstrations, strikes, and armed revolutions, and are the champion challengers of oppressors and deviants. The Ba'thists were the people's hope in opposing the Baghdad Pact and Nuri Sa'id's tyranny. They were the knights of struggle against Qasim's dictatorship, and against communist and anti-Arab tyranny. They created the first armed revolution led by a mass revolutionary party in the Arab homeland when they rose up in 1963, and they led the second revolution in 1968 against Arif's corrupt and reactionary regime. These are the Ba'thists, and whilst they are like this, there is no fear for them.

As for its leader, Saddam Hussein, he is not a politician who has inherited power or gained it through rigged elections. He is "the youth" who began his political struggle as a gun-toting feda'i in Baghdad's Rashid Street to teach the anti-Arab dictator Abdul-Karim Qasim, a harsh lesson. He is the fighter who was sentenced to death, led the secret

civil and military cells of the Party after the counter-revolution of October, 1963, entered prison in 1964, and escaped to continue his struggle and leading role until the triumph of the 17th-30th July revolution. He is the fighter, the organizer, the thinker, and the leader.

Neither the Ba' th Party, nor Saddam Hussein are afraid. If either imagined it were possible to exploit the sectarian situation in Iraq to threaten her unity, or to undermine the Arab character of the Iraqi people, they would be highly mistaken.

Iraq is a country with a long history within the framework of Arab history. Over thousands of years, its history has shown that it was always a fort of Arabism, and a fence defending invasions by the Persians and other covetous hordes. Were the Arab character of Iraq and the Iraqi people themselves liable to have their spirits broken, Iraq would have been shattered centuries ago, or in the modern age, twenty years ago during Qasim's rule and the communist tide. It would not have waited another twenty years for the Iranian rulers to come from outside her borders under the banner of the Ba' th revolution and Saddam Hussein's leadership to injure its unity and Arab character.

Iraq, which has various Islamic sects, and several religious denominations and nationalities, is an integral unit which is indivisible. All those who

imagine they can somehow do harm are invited to try and do so if they wish.

The question is not one of fear for themselves on the part of the Party or the revolution because of events in Iran and her rulers' threats. Iraq, with its national responsibility, is afraid of the ills to which the Arab nation may be exposed with the situation the Iranian rulers want to impose on the area, and with the suspicious opportunistic and contradictory stands adopted by certain Arab leaderships and political circles, who are behaving in such a way as to encourage the Iranian rulers to delude themselves and continue as they are, without any sense of responsibility.

Many ruling leaderships and political parties, in fact, are behaving in a highly illogical fashion towards the situation in Iran. Let us take some examples. A day has not yet passed since the Iranian "revolution" when Khomeini, Bani Sadr, Qotbzadeh, or other rulers have not issued abusive statements condemning communism and the Soviet Union, and this is a well-known fact.

On the other hand, however, we find communist organizations, such as Na'if Hawatma's organization, the Iraqi Communist Party, and others, supporting these rulers who insult them in their

press, and direct fabrication and slander against the revolution in Iraq, the revolutionary party, and its national revolutionary leadership.

To take another example, the Iranian media are conducting a malicious campaign against the ABSP and the nationalist ideology, and Bani Sadr, amongst other things, is openly accusing Arab nationalism of being "Zionist". In Syria, a regime claiming to be of the ABSP and based on the "nationalist ideology" is disregarding the "ideological" insults, and allying itself with Iran's rulers against Iraq.

A third example is that Colonel Qaddafi stands accused of having liquidated Musa Sadr. The Iranian leaderships continue to blackmail the Libyan Government and to stir the matter, which is barely kept silent a week than it flares up the next. After Qaddafi had been "cleared" of spilling Sadr's blood, the Iranians decided to form a supreme committee to reinvestigate, and then adjourned the matter. To date, the Iranian leaderships are refusing to have diplomatic relations with Libya,whilst Qaddafi himself continues to heap praise on the Iranian "revolution", and describe it as an extension of his own "revolution".

What is the explanation for this peculiar situation, and what is the intention behind this complicated process of shuffling the cards and

building an intricate maze? Is it not strange that the three parties referred to, namely the communists, the Syrians, and the Libyan regime, claim to be holders of "ideologies"... and yet these "ideologies" of theirs are villified day and night by the Iranian regime? Is it not also strange that these three "ideological" parties behave as if they are deaf and blind, heaping praise on and lending support to these rulers?

We shall not explain the positions of these "ideological" masters, as it is their responsibility to do so to those who belong to their "ideologies". However, we shall at least see one rather odd case which encourages the Iranians to be vain, reckless, the suspect and continue with their damaging behaviour, their sick dreams, and their dubious schemings. This is that when faced with such circumstances and examples, they find themselves incapable of tolerating Iraq's solid and adamant principled stand, this being in complete harmony with itself, its doctrine, and the interests of the Arab nation. They then become hysterical, as manifested in the statements and actions of those rulers today against Iraq and the Arab Gulf states, or in other words, against those Arab countries which are geographically close to them, because they find hypocrisy with the "far away" Arabs.

What is wanted of the area, the Arab nation, and the matter of its future in terms of unity, independence and liberating Palestine by shuffling the cards, and creating such mazes? The area has never before seen a process combining such complexity, blindness, spuriousness, and hypocrisy.

Who is behind this wide and complicated process which has never before been paralleled? Who is responsible for making Islam reject and clash with revolutionary and socialist Arab nationalism?

How dare Bani Sadr describe Arab nationalism as Zionism? Or was Arab nationalism not the banner under which the Arabs struggled against the Ottomans and their chauvinistic fanaticism? Or was not Arab nationalism, with its progressive liberation essence, as borne by the prime national strugglers, the ABSP, Jamal Abdul Nasser, and the Algerian Revolution, the driving force of the masses against British and French colonialism and the military alliances? Or was not Arab nationalism the revolutionary force behind the Arab and Palestinian struggles against Zionism and imperialism?

Why then should anyone wish to distort and destroy it in this way, and in whose interest? How should we understand the alliance, sometimes open and sometimes covert, between movements using religion as a cover and certain parties and commu-

nist movements, when they have such obvious contrasts? What united them as one to deal a blow to Arab nationalism, and to entertain misgivings about the methods used for gaining national independence? Why are they rushing along so blindly and with such venom to destroy the national league, which united the nation, despite its differences, and unified the struggle against Zionism and imperialism?

Who is behind this complex process of shuffling the cards and creating a maze, with the aim of instigating conflict between those elements which are supposedly in harmony, and achieving harmony between those elements which are supposedly in contradiction? Which evil forces are behind the attempts to spread confusion amongst the Arab youth and masses?

What benefits are to be gained from all this by the nation? Is this the situation which will strengthen the nation in its struggle against Zionism? Or is it the situation which will lead to the fragmentation of the Arab nation, cause conflict to erupt, and spread the Lebanese experience over more parts of the Arab world, so that Zionism, which has reached the banks of the Nile with its conspiracies, will reach the banks of the Euphrates?

Does this situation strengthen the Arab nation's struggle against imperialism? Or will imperialism use it to increase its control over the small portions of land resulting from the fragmentation of the nation, and then the nation will lose its independence? Will hopes for unity and the liberation of Palestine be lost? And will the Arab nation return to the Mameluke period or the era of petty kings, and be distributed amongst the superpowers?

Why is all this venom being directed against Iraq and its sincere national leadership? Does this not indicate a pernicious attempt to injure Iraq and what it has represented in history, and what it today represents in the new life of the Arabs?

Iraq, led by the ABSP and Saddam Hussein, is the outstanding model of complete patriotic and national independence, economic independence, political independence, and free will.

Iraq is the model of the Patriotic and national rule which, without distinction, puts people on an equal footing. It spread national unity, security and stability, and provided the right conditions for the country to grow and flourish. All over Iraq everything has progressed: agriculture, industry, culture and services. The rates of development have increased in all fields, and the Iraqi is living a new life,

and happy horizons are opening to each citizen and countryman.

Iraq is the country which watches over Arab interests, sacrificing its own interests for the nation's independence and sovereignty, and for the liberation of Palestine.

Iraq's leadership took the historic initiative of opposing the Camp David conspiracy and Sadat's treachery, and assumed responsibility for the Baghdad summit, which it still continues to do. Iraq's leadership presented President Saddam Hussein's declaration on March 8th to protect Arab territory from foreign influence, and prevent the establishment of foreign military bases at a time when fervent imperialist attempts to spread influence over Arab territory were being made. Iraq's leadership, with the Charter, called for the relations of the Arab nation with its neighbours to be based on cooperation, good-neighbourliness, and fraternity.

This is the model which Iraq today represents. So in whose interest is this poisonous venom directed against it? Is there an attempt to inflict punishment on Iraq because of what it has done and what it now represents in Arab life?

The Arab masses are suffering from many negative attitudes, and are being assailed by various forces aiming at distorting the picture before them, weaken their self-confidence, and push them into dangerous situations. But these masses, who have been deep in experience, are able to distinguish right from wrong, facts from lies, and truth from falsehood, even despite all attempts to shuffle the cards and weave intricate webs and mazes.

This pamphlet consists of three articles written by Mr. Tareq Aziz, member of the Revolutionary Command Council and deputy Prime Minister in Iraq, on Arab-Iranian relations and published by *al-Thawra* daily newspaper of Baghdad and also by al-Watan al-Araby weekly magazine of Paris, in May 1980.

These articles present an analytical account of the historical roots of Arab-Iranian relations and the development of these relations in recent years under the old rulers as the new ones.

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